

4
Gov. JOHNSTON'S SPEECH

ON

AMERICAN AFFAIRS,

ON THE

ADDRESS in Answer to the KING'S SPEECH.

*Iustum, & tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida.*

Hor. lib. iii. ode 3.

EDINBURGH:

Printed for, and sold by, JOHN WOOD, Luckenbooths.

M,DCC,LXXVI.

DS 2962.13.9



HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
EBELING COLLECTION
GIFT OF ISRAEL THORNTON
1918

92-151

Go

Ad

T

the
fine
pow
own
they
men
that
upon
semb
of th
the
er o
pert
prop
man
" je
" b
" w
truth
belie
one
the
vern
to th
affem

• A
some
Flor

† s

Gov. JOHNSTON's* SPEECH

ON THE

ADDRESS in answer to the KING's S P E E C H.

TH E speech of the honourable baronet who spoke last †, is very much like that we have heard from the throne, full of assumed false facts, and general undefined axioms. The Americans, Sir, maintain, That the power of giving and granting their own money, by their own free and voluntary consent, is the only security they can retain for the just administration of government, at so great a distance from the seat of empire; that it is the main spring, in their several establishments, upon which the meeting and power of their several assemblies, depend; from whence the singular prosperity of the British colonies, above all others on the face of the earth, have flowed. They admit you have the power of limiting the means by which they may acquire property; but they deny you the power of disposing of this property after it is so acquired. In his Majesty's speech many general undefined axioms prevail: "To be a subject of Great Britain, with all its consequences, is to be the freest member of any civil society in the known world" All America with one voice agree in this truth; their writings and their actions proclaim their belief; but they maintain, as I assert in their behalf, that one of the unalienable consequences of that situation, is the giving and granting of aids for the support of government, according to the exigency that shall appear to their own understanding; and that to tax them in an assembly where they have no representatives, and by men
who

* A younger son of the family of Westerhall in Dumfriesshire, some time of his Majesty's navy, and late governor of West Florida.

† Sir Adam Ferguson.

who have no interest in the subsidy they impose, is contrary to the spirit of the British constitution, and, in its consequences, must deprive them of all the essential rights of a British subject. Another essential right of a British subject is trial by a jury. Has not this been abrogated in many cases by the late acts of parliament, and totally destroyed in all civil causes in the extensive province of Quebec? The writ of *Habeas corpus* is another essential right of a British subject: has not this also been done away? I forbear to enumerate the other oppressive proceedings, contrary to the whole tenor of our government; dissolving of charters, without evidence, trial, or forfeiture; laws to deny the natural rights of the elements, confounding the innocent with the guilty; because, when once the three great pillars of the British constitution are removed, taxing without representatives, trial without jury, imprisonment without relief by writ of *Habeas corpus*, the whole must necessarily fall into confusion, and the rest is not worth contending for. The people in America wisely foresee the suppression of all their rights, in the train of those iniquitous innovations. They perceive, that every thing which is dear to a freeman is at stake; and they are willing, as becomes the children of their ancestors, to put all to the risk, and sacrifice their lives and fortunes, rather than give up the liberty of a subject of Great Britain, with all its consequences.

The honourable baronet has concluded his speech with another reason for inducing us to join in the coercive measures proposed by the address, which is still more extraordinary, saying, "Whether we succeed or not, may be uncertain; but if we fail, we shall even then be no worse than we were." These are the very words of the Noble Lord on the treasury bench last year. I am persuaded the worthy baronet has words of his own so much at will, that he borrows from no man: but I am more surprised he can sanctify such opinions by his voice. If America is forced to invite foreign powers to share in her commerce; if she is drove to the necessity of following the example of Holland and Switzerland; if our armies are destroyed, our fleets wrecked, our treasures wasted, our reputation for justice

justice and humanity lost, our senates corrupted by the emoluments which must fall to individuals in the prosecution of so expensive a war, and four shillings land-tax entailed on us for ever, will the honourable gentleman say we are only where we were! What objects can call the attention of the house in a stronger degree than those I have enumerated; and yet they are all involved in the question now before you, if you reject the amendment proposed. I say, it is unfair in administration, and an affront to every individual member of the house, to call upon them, without any information laid on your table, without evidence brought to your bar, destitute of every material by which a rational creature can resolve, to require he should give his unlimited sanction to measures of such moment, on the very first day (perhaps) of his arrival in town. The reason is obvious to me: The minister clearly perceives, if men were acquainted with the real state of things in America; if they had time to acquire information, to reason, and reflect, that all men of generous feelings would leave him, and even his most desperate followers might be shaken. Men are to be brought to this black business hoodwinked, they are to be drawn in by degrees, till they cannot retreat.

The Americans told you, in language the most direct and simple, again and again repeated, that they would resist to the last appeal those arbitrary innovations. But you affected not to believe them. Nevertheless, I maintain, the armaments were calculated to resist men in arms; and the insufficiency arose from a total ignorance of the force, character, and dispositions of the people in America, as well as a misconception upon the effect the several restraining bills passed last sessions would produce; in short, from a perfect ignorance of the operations of cruelty and oppression of high minded men, acting under the spirit of freedom. All the knowledge of administration seems to have been drawn from one source, that of Governor Hutchinson. The civil war now raging in America, seems, step by step, to have been carried on by his advice. Whoever reads his letters, lately published in America, sees every measure pursued by administration to have been antecedently pointed out

by this gentleman in his *confidential* correspondence, until his sentiments seem dictated at last more by revenge and disappointment than any other principle. What confidence should be placed in the advice of a man who has declared, in the cool moments of committing his reflections to paper, that every Machiavalian policy is now to be vindicated towards the people in America? I am here supposing the letters in my hand to be genuine, and there is little reason to doubt their authenticity, as they remain uncontradicted. And here I must avow my sentiments as freely as Governor Hutchinson has communicated his, that any officer in government, much less the supreme magistrate, entrusted with the preservation of the rights of every individual in his province, who could entertain such sentiments, is unfit to be employed in any office, civil or military, after a fact of so heinous a nature against the constitution being fully proved. I am confident our ancestors, instead of giving such a man an enormous pension, would have inflicted the punishment he deserved; which I think should have been, an address to the Crown that he might never more be employed in the service of the public.

I know there are many men high in favour who are for abridging the liberties of the people in the colonies. My system, on the contrary, is for preserving them sacred and inviolate, according to their several ancient institutions, the variety of which forms the harmony and beauty of the whole. There is no middle institution, as in this country, to balance between the people and the crown: The assemblies are their only barrier; they are therefore the favourite institution of the people; to them they look for protection against the exactions, oppressions, and extortions of governors; and they are, on that account, cautious and jealous of any infringement that shall diminish their power.

The scheme the hon. gentleman * alludes to, of calling forth the slaves, is too black and horrid to be adopted. Neither would it answer, if administration were wicked enough to make the attempt. The state of slavery cuts off all the great magnanimous inventive powers of the human mind, but it rather strengthens
fidelity

* Gov. Littelton.

fidelity and attachment. The Roman history fully confirms this: Amidst the multiplied treachery of friends and relations, amidst the greatest temptations, during the corruptions of that government, the slave was seldom or never unfaithful to his master. The principle lies in human nature. Where mankind are deprived of the means of getting subsistence, where they are accustomed to look up to another for food, raiment, and protection, they insensibly forget the original injury they sustained, and become attached to their master. In general, I must also observe, that masters are kind to their slaves. It is not he who uses the scourge and the whip, which the hon. gentleman has mentioned, that is the first to put the musket on his shoulders in such glorious contests as these; it is not he who tortures and frets his fellow-creatures: but he who feels that universal benevolence which extends his affections to all men in their several stations; who feels the spirit of equality; who knows the principles of liberty; who understands the consequence of those rights, without which we are always worse men and worse subjects; and who is willing, for the benefit of children yet unborn, to seal the truth of his doctrine with his blood. It is not to a man of this temper that slaves will prove unfaithful. I shall rather expect to see them flock round his standard, tho' I admit the experiment is too dangerous on either side.

I say again, the whole of our blunders, oppressions, and mistakes in these unfortunate disputes, have arisen from ignorance in the first principles of government, gross ignorance in the several constitutions of the colonies, ignorance in the power we could apply to subdue them, and still greater ignorance of the end to be obtained by such an attempt. To each of these I will severally speak.—I say, it demonstrates a perfect ignorance of the history of civil society, to assert, (which is the captivating argument used in this house for breaking down all the barriers of liberty in America), that two independent legislatures cannot exist in the same community, and therefore we are to destroy the whole fabric of those governments which have subsisted for so many years. Mankind are constantly quoting some trite maxim, and appealing to their limited theory in politics,

tics, while they reject established facts. I say, a free government necessarily involves many clashing jurisdictions, if pushed to the extreme. I maintain, this species of government must ever depend more on the spirit of freedom that first established it, than on all the parchment you can cover with words. I aver, that in the most active triumphant commonwealth which ever appeared on the stage of the world, two distinct legislative authorities did actually exist; the *comitia tributa*, and the *comitia centuriata*. The whole government of Athens would appear as containing so many ridiculous paradoxes to those wise politicians. The actual state of Holland, where every town is a distinct government within itself; the deliberations of the states-general, where no money can be raised unless the whole are unanimous, no new laws made or any old repealed against one dissenting voice; all these would appear impossible to such politicians, who are ever supposing mankind ready to destroy themselves. Nevertheless the facts are equally certain.

If the best part of our constitution were to be stated to a foreigner, the trial by jury, where twelve men must be unanimous in their opinion, in causes the most intricate and nice, when even the ablest counsel differ in opinion, he would be led to imagine justice might stand still: yet we all know, nothing proves so easy in the execution. The danger of pushing things to extremes, makes the good sense of men prevail, while the power of resisting in every individual jurymen, prevents prejudice and injustice from trying their strength on matters that are not tenible.

The springs of a free government are not obvious to every understanding, while the meanest foot-soldier knows all the powers of despotism. Here the supremacy of the magistrate solves every question. In the same manner the advantages derived from America, in the circle of commerce, are not so evident to a vulgar understanding, as so much palpable cash paid into the exchequer. For this reason I am ready to forgive those who differ from me in opinion concerning this American contest. It demands a process of reasoning to which common understandings are not generally accustomed.

I should not be surprised if half the people in England should at first join against the Americans; national prejudice, pride, false glory, and false arithmetic, all contribute to deceive them; but that any man, assuming the character of a statesman, should proceed in this mad career, to destroy in a few years that beautiful system of empire our ancestors have been raising with so much pains and glory, first under the false pretence of raising a revenue, and next under a more false pretence that America wishes to throw off her just dependence on Great Britain; this, I confess does surprise me. For this reason my indignation chiefly arises against the noble Lord on the floor. I am willing to acquit all his colleagues, and most of his followers, even if they had not the interested motives of places and pensions to bias their judgement: but that the noble Lord, who yearly considers the riches that come into the public treasury; who knows, and can trace, all the circuitous channels by which riches flow into this country; that he should place no more to the credit of America than the paltry sum collected by his insignificant commissioners, and endeavour to mislead others by such assertions, this indeed is beyond belief. When the noble Lord is pleased to take the other side of the argument, what abundance of wealth does he sometimes pour forth in the most copious flow of eloquence! When he supports this rugged coercive system, how he labours and flags! nothing but sounding words and unmeaning phrases.

The dignity of parliament! Now I say, this is best supported by humanity and justice, and maintaining the freedom of the subject. The *supremacy* of the legislative authority of Great Britain! this I call unintelligible jargon. Instead of running the different privileges belonging to the various parts of the empire into one common mass of power, gentlemen should consider that the very first principles of good government in this wide-extended dominion, consist in subdividing the empire into many parts, and giving to each individual an immediate interest, that the community to which he belongs should be well regulated. This is the principle upon which our ancestors established those different colonies or communities; this is the principle upon which

they have flourished so long and so prosperously ; this is the principle on which alone they can be well governed at such a distance from the seat of the empire. Yet we are breaking through all those sacred maxims of our forefathers, and giving the alarm to every wise man on the continent of America, that all his rights depend on the will of men whose corruptions are notorious, who regard him as an enemy, and who have no interest in his prosperity, and feel no controul from him as a constituent.

The most learned writer on government has defined civil and political liberty to consist in a perfect security as to a man's rights : After the acts of parliament of last year, can any man on the great continent of America say that he feels that security ? Could any thing less than a dread of losing every essential privilege have united a people so divided in customs, manners, climate, and communications ? Could any thing less than an entire want of policy, a species of political phrenzy, here, have produced this wonderful effect ?

You blame the Americans, but do not consider the next step which your conduct necessarily drives them to. You assert, they aim at independency : I assert, they wish for nothing more than a constitutional dependence on Great Britain, according as they have subsisted from their first establishments, and according as Ireland depends on the British legislature at this moment. Can any man who knows the power of the crown in the legislative and executive parts of our colony-government ; who understands the force of the several acts of navigation ; who knows the incitements and attachments by the education of youth in this country ; who knows what would be the effects of mixing the colonists in our fleets and armies, and every other office in our government ; who considers the effects of appeals in the last resort to his Majesty in council ; who knows the power of his Majesty in annulling laws made in the colonies within three years ; who perceives the advantages that every part of the empire derives from the prosperity of the other : who is there, I say, capable of digesting those thoughts, that can entertain the ignoble jealousies daily expressed against the Americans, or show any motive

tive why the people in America should break the bond of union with this country for ages yet to come, unless driven to that extremity, by following Mr Hutchinson's advice, in "abridging their liberties," which is as much a part of their birthright, as of any man living and born in England?

The nature of government will not allow us to define what are the precise points where resistance may be made to the governing powers; but will any man conclude from thence, that acts of King, Lords, and Commons, ought not to be resisted, if they should sap the fundamental principles of the constitution? Nothing but the general feeling of the community can determine the point: and was ever the sense of a people so unanimous on any subject? I declare, upon my honour, I have not conversed with one man from America, (and I have chiefly sought out the friends of administration), who have not universally agreed, that all America is unanimous in resisting the power of taxing them by the British parliament where they have no representatives; that they will never yield this point; that in case they were made easy on this point, and secure as to their charters, on which their property depends, they would immediately return to their duty and obedience. This I aver to be the universal report and opinion of all men with whom I have conversed from America. If any one disputes the truth of my assertions, I now defy him to bring any evidence to contradict me, and I now undertake to bring men of the best characters in support of what I aver. But respecting general opinion, I still go further: I maintain, that the sense of the best and wisest men in this country are on the side of the Americans; that three to one in Ireland are on their side; that the soldiers and sailors feel an unwillingness to the service; that you never will find the same exertions of spirit in this as in other wars. I speak it to the credit of the fleet and army: they do not like to butcher men, whom the greatest characters in this country consider as contending in the glorious cause of preserving those institutions which are necessary to the happiness, security, and elevation of the human mind. I am well informed, that four field-officers, in the four regiments

now

now going from Ireland, have desired leave to retire, or sell out. I do not mean to say, that the soldiers or sailors in America have shown any signs of cowardice; this is below their spirit: I only assert, they in general proclaim it a disagreeable service: most of the army feel it as such; that numbers have not deserted is owing to their situation. There is a wide difference between the English officer or soldier who barely does his duty, and the general exertions of the New-England army, where every man is thinking what further service he can perform, where every soldier is a Scævola. *

To a mind who loves to contemplate the glorious spirit of freedom, no spectacle can be more affecting than the action at Bunker's-hill. To see an irregular peasantry, commanded by a physician, inferior in number, opposed by every circumstance of cannon and bombs that could terrify timid minds, calmly waiting the attack of the gallant Howe, leading on the best troops in the world, with an excellent train of artillery, and twice repulsing those very troops who had often chased the chosen battalions of France, and at last retiring for want of ammunition, but in so respectable a manner, that they were not even pursued: who can reflect on such scenes, and not adore the constitution of government which could breed such men! Who will not pause, and examine, before he destroys institutions that have reared such elevated spirits? Who is there that can dismiss all doubts on the justice of a cause which can inspire such conscious rectitude?

The conduct of the people of New England, for wisdom, courage, temperance, fortitude, and all those qualities that can command the admiration of noble minds, is not surpassed in the history of any nation under the sun. Instead of wreaking our vengeance against that colony, their heroism alone should plead their forgiveness. What my worthy friend † said last year of their industry, may now be applied to their warlike achievements. Consider the power of such materials in the hands of a minister who knew how to encourage their industry

* A Roman soldier, who failing in an attempt to kill Porcena King of Tuscany then besieging Rome, thrust his hand into the fire till it was consumed.

† Mr Burke.

industry, and apply their courage to the purposes of national defence. But all the secret of our colony-government is now reduced to mere force, the baneful engine of destructive despotism. Nevertheless, it is with pleasure I perceive, the force of this country, when wielded in such a cause, is totally inadequate: your own army is not sufficient: your illegal application for foreign mercenaries, at the beginning of the contest, sufficiently shews your weakness: your navy is equally incapable of effecting the purposes which are expected from it. It may ruin their foreign trade: it may destroy some of their towns, (though that is doubtful); but the lying in their rivers, as some suppose, without a superior military force to protect them on shore, I say, as a sea-officer, if the war is thoroughly kindled, the thing is impossible. We are apt to judge from what happened at Quebec, where the French, never remarkable for naval enterprise, though naturally brave, quitted their fire-raft, and left it to the chance of the stream, or to be towed off by boats: but this I maintain, that any fleet lying in a river where they cannot command the shore, that such fleet is liable to be burnt if the people are willing in that enterprise to run the same risk of life and danger to which the crew of the ships are exposed; I mean, by sticking by the fire-vessel, whatever she may be, till with wind and stream they lay the enemy athwart haufe: and who can doubt, that the people in America are capable of such exertions of courage, when we see them refuse quarter, when we find them devoting themselves to death with such enthusiasm?

Another circumstance respecting ships is not generally known. The wonders they have hitherto performed have been owing to the ignorance of engineers in placing their batteries: but I am afraid the secret is now out as to their power against the shore, without a military force to assist them. A single gun in a retired situation, or on an eminence, or a single howitzer, will dislodge a first-rate man of war, and may burn her to add to the disgrace. I speak this publicly, that you may not expect more from the sea service than it is capable to perform. Ruin their trade you certainly may, but at an expence as ruinous to this country.

Has

Has any of the ministry considered the immense expence of such naval armaments on the coast of America, in transports and ships of war? Have we calculated the chance of destruction by those horrid streams of wind peculiar to that coast, that sometimes sweep away all before them? Where are the resources on which this country can depend, in case our empire in America is lost? I do not say you will feel the disadvantage immediately, I know the various channels to which commerce and industry may divert their streams; I am also certain, that the wants of America must be supplied in some way or other with certain goods from Great Britain: I further know, that a nation can only trade to the extent of its capital, and in case one vent is cut off, it will probably find another, while its manufactures are cheaper and better than those of other nations. I believe such to be the case with many branches of our manufactures at present: but is it possible it can long continue? Must not the same laws of nature follow this commercial country that have affected Venice and Genoa, the Hans towns, and other commercial states? The acquirement of wealth must produce dearness in living; dearness of living must produce dearness of labour; dearness of labour must produce dearness of manufactures; dearness of manufactures must conduct trade to some place where cheapness of living will give the preference in the markets. Thus the circle of commerce has hitherto run. But the settlement of North America under the old establishment, seemed to defy the power of those fleeting principles. America was bound to take your manufactures only, to whatever price they might rise: you were bound to take most of her raw materials, and to give her commerce protection; a compleat system in the exchange of all commodities was established within your own dominion, which might last beyond the views of human calculation, if properly conducted. This is the great purpose to which I look up to America as a naval and as a commercial power. How often have I indulged myself in these thoughts, unable to see the end of our glory from the same causes which have destroyed other states? little dreaming that one infatuated minister could tempt, seduce, and persuade

suade a whole nation to cut the strings of such harmony.

An honourable gentleman, who opened the debate, has remarked, how we recovered from the interruptions of our commerce during the last war. The honourable gentleman forgets, that we had the free and uninterrupted resources of America during the last war ; that, in seizing the ships of our enemies, we added to the national wealth, and increased our own commerce ; the progress was double : here it runs in an inverse proportion ; no man knows the final effects as yet ; like the bursting of a burning mountain, it is sport and play to the distant spectators, who think themselves safe, but the eruption may spread to cover the city in ruin.

I come now to consider the consequences of all those measures supposing we should succeed. If national strength is to be calculated from the fitness of every part to preserve and improve the advantages of their constitution, and to support their country in pursuit of its objects ; if institutions that secure property and prevent oppression, encourage the settlement of families, and facilitate the rearing of children, are the most favourable to mankind, and therefore to be protected and preferred, as the best writer on government has asserted, surely the establishments of the English colonies, as excelling all others which have appeared in the history of the world, deserve to be revered in this respect. But a success in the present war, after destroying all the principles which have produced those glorious effects in civil society, must leave the country desolate ; must spread thro' that wide dominion, forfeitures, executions, change of property, military oppression, and every misery that can engender hatred, and distract mankind. But these are but temporary evils, in comparison to the last dreadful catastrophe. It must establish a military despotism in the colonies, which the revenues of an oppressed people never can pay ; an army that the men of this country can never supply, which therefore foreign mercenaries must fill ; and all this with additional powers in the crown, that must end in the subversion of the constitution. I make no doubt many men labour in the support of this business, purposely to effect that end. The contentions in a free government do not accord with their feeble,

feeble, corrupt, luxurious dispositions. That the spirit of the people should so long lie deceived by their arts and management, is to me astonishing. I shall wait patiently some farther calamity; for no reasoning on the certain progress of things in a growing empire can affect their narrow minds. That this may soon happen in a small degree, as the only means of saving the dissolution of the whole, I sincerely wish, for the good of the public. Misfortunes, if duly watched, are oftentimes as profitable to unfeeling multitude as they are useful to private individuals. But let those who now encourage measures that must inevitably end in such dreadful calamities, beware of the turn of the tide. Let them look into history, and remember the fate of cruel, oppressive, and arrogant statesmen. Let even kings attend to the examples which history presents on this subject.—But I blame not them: it is unnatural for beings, with human passions, placed in such high situations, mixing little with men, and generally deceived, to bear contradiction to their will, and opposition even to their arms, with any degree of patience: irritation and resentment must be the consequences. Encroachments on their part often proceed from a conscious rectitude of their own intentions: but the people I do blame are the members of this house, placed as the guardians of the people's rights and privileges, daily sacrificing them to some interested motive.

Let any one consider all the national advantages that can be drawn from colonies, and ask his own heart, if we have not hitherto drawn, and may not in time to come draw all these from the ancient constitution. To what motive then can these innovations be imputed? I have shewed you the bad consequences in proceeding; shew me the good you propose from slaughter and devastation. That the paymaster of the forces should urge you to those measures; that the treasurer of the navy should press for large equipments; that contractors, jobbers, dealers in scrip, and all those who fatten on public supplies, should eagerly concur; this I can easily imagine: but that a landed gentleman should give his consent to rush into a civil war, that must entail four shillings land tax on his estate forever; that must drain him

of

of men and money, and all the resources of naval power, to protect his country against those neighbouring powers, who will, in all human probability, attack him when defenceless and exhausted; in a contest that must end, on whatever alternative, in lowering the value of his estate: all this exhibits a degree of infatuation beyond example in my little reading, and can only be accounted for from the revival of ignoble party-distinctions, gratifying resentments at the expence of their country.

Have the country gentlemen ever considered the expence of maintaining a war across the Atlantic? have they considered the expences of a fleet? have they calculated the amount of transports? have they thought of feeding an army with porter, sheep and four crout, across a tempestuous ocean? I am told a curious spectacle of such management has lately been exhibited in the Downs, where floating carcases of dead sheep have marked to passing nations the folly of such attempts.—The project of four crout has indeed one circumstance attending it that gives me pleasure: I understand the contract is given to one of the worthiest men in the community: at the same time such magazines are new in my notions of war; it may be a proper preparation for a Russian army, but I believe English soldiers will hardly be delighted with such griping food. The project of calcining ice into gunpowder is not more truly ridiculous.

I shall suppose, then, for a moment, that war with America is really necessary: yet will any man alledge, after such gross mismanagement in every part, that these are the proper men to carry it on? Has there been consistency in any part of their conduct? Has one scheme they have offered succeeded? Has not every one produced a contrary effect? Have they not been told so at the time of passing their various laws? Have they been checked in any of their intentions? Has any uncommon accident of wind or weather been unfavourable? Can our affairs be possibly in a worse situation? Do they state any rational plan of ways and means by which we are to extricate ourselves? If, after answering all those questions in the spirit of truth and justice, this house will still persist in supporting such feeble ministers of so mighty an empire, I must submit to a majority; but with
this

this melancholy consolation, when the day of tribulation shall come, that at least my feeble endeavours were not wanting to prevent the impending mischiefs, nor has my voice been lent on any occasion in support of oppression. Other gentlemen of a contrary opinion to me, have declared they give their opinion for more coercive measures, from motives the most pure and disinterested: I declare I give my opinion against them, from the sincerest belief they are oppressive and unjust. I am now at an age when my character must be fully known. A conduct in life that has not flattered the passions of men, must have frequently called forth the examination of many with keen resentments: but I here defy any man to say I was ever actuated by interested motives during the course of my life. My conduct at present is influenced from a conscientious belief, that the greatest good any man can perform, is to preserve institutions favourable to the freedom of mankind; the greatest evil they can commit, is to destroy them: in that belief I heartily vote for the amendment, and to the utmost of my power oppose this sanguinary address.